

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, June 26. 1707.

I Have been for some Time upon the reciprocal Duty of these two Nations one to another, upon this new and mighty Revolution of their Constitutions, I mean the Union ; I have, with as few Digressions as I could, gone thro' the first Part of this reciprocal Duty, as it respects Religion—And have endeavour'd to press both sides to a Union of Affection, tho' there be not an Union of Opinion, I repeat nothing.

I cannot leave the Head without a Word or two of general Caution to both sides, which is, that in order to this uniting Principle, you would beware, Gentlemen, of being impos'd upon by the Enemies of *Britain's* Tranquility, in Stories vilely forged and calculated for the dividing us, and fixing radicated Antipathies between us, so if possible to keep us divided in Mind, while we are united in Form.

And now, Gentlemen, that I may not seem to caution you against a Chimera, to talk of a thing that is not, and amuse you with an *ignis fatuus* of my own, a Man of Straw, a mere Scare-Crow with no Substance, bear with me to mention some of the Forgeries, that are industriously spread on both sides, if possible, to render the People odious to one another, and fill the Imagination of the People with Prejudices, and so by Consequence prevent that publick Peace all good Men expect from this Union.

I have had a Letter by me a long Time from a very worthy Friend of mine in the *West*, with the following Story.

That while the Affair of the Union with *Scotland* was the Subject of Conversation, and every one was giving their Judgment of things according to their various Parties, a Reverend Clergy-man

of

of the Church of England, in a Church not above 150 Miles from Excester, the Name both of Church and Person, tho' I forbear them in Regard to Peace, are at the Service of the Party if they desire it, inveighing from the Pulpit against the Scots Presbyterians, told his Auditory in *totidem Verbis*, that the Scots Presbyterians left out the fifth Petition of the Lords Prayer, because they would not forgive their Episcopal Brethren.

This Account, however ridiculous and malicious, had the Fate of being so universally acceptable, and consequently so eagerly taken in by the Party, who wanted something to rail at the Scots Presbyterians for, that a great many honest People began too much to be in Doubt about it, and I have been particularly desir'd to acquaint the Gentlemen in that Country, whether there be any thing in it or no.

I confess, this empty Slander had so much Malice in it, but withal so little Wit, and was so eminently forged, that I never yet thought it worth while to give any Answer to it, but thought it merited Contempt and Silence, rather than a Return. — But when I came to the present Subject, I could not omit this as an Instance, what a restless Party act now against our Peace, and what a Refuge of Lies they have Recourse to, to prop their sinking Cause by dividing us at Home, and spreading foolish but fruitful Slanders about the World, in order to make us jealous of one another.

And this is the only Reason, that inclines me to give any thing of a serious Answer to this foolish Slander.

The best Answer that can be given to it, is to state the Matter of Fact clearly to the World from the Historical Part, of which the Impartial Observer of things may in a few Words answer it himself.

The Directory for publick Worship, which is the present Rule of the Kirk of Scotland, and by which, Inclusive of any Acts of Assembly since made, relating to the publick Performances, did not oblige the Ministers to use the Lords Prayer; they did not lay it as an Injunction upon them, because it has always been look'd upon rather as a Directory for Prayer, than an express Form to the

Words of which they were limited by the Text.

But to show the Veneration and Defe-
rence they had, even to the Form, these Words are subjoin'd in the Directory in the Article of publick Prayer after Sermon; "And because the Prayer, which Christ taught his Disciples, is not only a Pattern of Prayer, but it self a most comprehensive Prayer; we recommend it also to be us'd in the Prayers of the Church. Vide, *Confession of Faith*, &c. of the Church of Scotland, p. 391.

If it be objected, that this was done above 60 Years ago, and is not to be esteem'd as the Act of the Church now, I am to answer that by acquainting the Enquirer, that upon a late Debate in the Assembly, particularly in View of the Case in hand, the Use of the Lords Prayer which was then controverted in the Assembly, upon the several Charges the Episcopal Clergy had made in Prior, that the Church had reject-
ed the Lords Prayer — It was recommended to the Ministers, as they thought proper to make Use of the Lords Prayer, and an Act of Assembly was made for approving and recommending the Lords Prayer, tho' not enjoying it, and this Act is entitled, *Recommendation concerning the Observation of the Directory for Worship*, being the 10th Act of the general Assembly, 1705, Sess. 12. *Ante Meridiem*, the Words are these; *The general Assembly hereby seriously recommends to all Ministers and others within this National Church, the due Observation of the Directory for the publick Worship of GOD, approved by the general Assembly held in the Year, 1645, S. S. 10.*

This Act being, as is well known, made wholly upon the Matter of the Lords Prayer, several Ministers, not that they thought themselves oblig'd to the constant Use of it, yet to show that they did not reject it a Form, as had been allerd'd by the Episcopal Clergy, did agree to make Use of it in the Church Occasionally, and others to this Day do it constantly. Tho' generally it was not the Practice in their Worship to use it as a Form.

Besides this, it is publicly written upon the Walls, in the most eminent and most conspicuous Places of the Churches, and is

so in all those which have been re-edify'd since the Revolution : And *Lastly*, the Use of the said Prayer, the due Reverence they pay to it, the Reasons why they do not confine themselves to it as a Form, and perhaps a true Exposition of the Meaning of the Text itself of our Lords Institution, and of the Intent and Meaning of prescribing it to the Churches, is at large printed by an eminent Divine of the Church of *Scotland*; Mr. *Hogge* in his Answer to Sir *Hugh Campbell* and Monsieur *Jean d'Espagne*, being an Appendix to his Casuistical Essay on the Lords Prayer.

This, I think, is a short and necessary History of the Matter of Fact, as to the Manner in which the Lords Prayer is used by the Church of *Scotland*; and as I shall go on to clear the Eye sight of those, who are thus blinded with Prejudices against their Brethren by the Forgeries and Misrepresentations of malicious Men, to carry on their Private and Party Designs, I thought it very proper to begin with this.

As to the ridiculous Sham of their leaving out the fifth Petition of the Lords Prayer, &c. I shall speak to it in our next.

MISCELLANEA.

I Gave you in my last a Letter full of weighty Questions relating to the War, and tho' I think, I am under no manner of Obligation to answer Questions, which require a Kind of Witchcraft and foretelling things to come, a Science I never made any Pretensions to; yet I have undertaken to give my Notions as to probable Consequences, which I desire every Body to read with the same Caution I write them with, viz. As only my Conjectures in which I hope, it shall be no Scandal to me to be mistaken.

To the first Question, whether the *French* in *Flanders* will fight, I have answer'd, they will not—Or as I have explain'd my self, they will not, if they are in their Sences; they will not, unless GOD Almighty, by his Providence as a Means to their Destruction, insatuates them, as he did *Pharoah* King of *Egypt*. Will any Man say, that *Pharoah* had any Business to venture his Army into the Sea after the *Israelites*? He could with much more Reason have said, let them go, they will all be starv'd in the Deserts, and I can send to raise the Kings on the other side to stop them in their March, till I overtake them by the Land, which 'tis plain was not far about; he could not but see, the parting the Waves was a supernatural thing, and his Experience of the Divine Hand in former Plagues might have made him wiser; but insatuated from Heaven, the mad Man ventures, and push'd on his own Destruction.

I cannot look back to the Battles of *Blenheim*, *Ramellies* and *Turin*, without seeing something of the same Insatuation; it was no more the Business of Monsieur *Tallard* and the D. of *Bavaria* to fight at *Blenheim*, than it was of *Pharoah* to follow the fugitive *Israelites* into the Red Sea; had they entrench'd, fortify'd, and so posted themselves, as not to be forced to an Engagement, but on extreme Disadvantages, 'tis manifest, the War in *Bavaria* had held till now, the great Army of the Allies could not have winter'd there, they must have return'd; the *English* and *Dutch* could never have kept their Armies at that Distance, the Duke of *Marlborough* could not have been spared from *Flanders*, nor Prince *Eugene* from *Italy*; the vast Expence of a remote War could not have been supported, and the Confederate Army would of Course have separated, and the *French* and *Bavarian* in the Winter would have been able to have dislodg'd them with vast Advantage, and have been in the Field long before any Return could be, they being at Home, their Magazines all at hand, and their Supplies cheap.

It was certainly therefore the Business of the D. of *Marlborough* to oblige them to a Battle; and it was certainly their Business to have shun'd it with their utmost Skill—But Insatuation made them brave, needlessly brave, fatally brave.

The same is the Case now; the *French* must be distracted, Blindfold from Heaven must have possess'd them, if they fight now, unless with prodigious Advantage; they have the better in *Spain*, so much the better I doubt, and on the *Rhine* they carry all before them; they have nothing to do but to stand on the Defensive in *Flanders* and in *Savoy*, and if they hold their own there, they really get the Day of us in the whole. And what else think you is the Reason, why his Grace the Duke of *Marlborough* seeks them out, marches and countermarches, fronts them and affronts them, but if possible, to make them fight; for 'tis our Business, if possible, to come to a Battle; 'tis theirs, if possible, to avoid it; all their Successes in the other Parts of the World will be of no Use to them, if they are but once beaten in *Flanders*—What signify'd the Victory of the Count de *Medavi* in *Italy* over the *Hessians*, when the Duke of *Orleans* play'd away the whole Game at *Turin*—What signify'd the *Marschal Villars* taking of *Blugneau*, with all the Cannon and Stores of the Imperial Army on the *Rhine*, while the Duke de *Villeroy* stak'd the Fortune of *France* at one Cast at *Ramellies*—What will the Lines of *Stolhoffen*, or the Battle of *Almanza* avail the *French*, if they lose another Battle in *Flanders*, which would in all Probability bring the Duke of *Marlborough* to the Gates of *Paris*; and these are my Reasons, why I am of the Opinion the *French* will not fight in *Flanders*, and should a Battle happen before this Paper be printed, I shall not at all be ashamed of my Reasons, nor think my self to blame for being mistaken: I do not say the *French* shall not be mad, I do not say Heaven shall not infatuate them, and shut their Eyes to their own Safety; but I do say, that unless some great Advantage offers to them of almost certain Victory, they are abandoned of their common Prudence, if they fight.

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